

MARCH 1989

Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat *Incorporated.*

EXCURSION - NEWS SHEET

Meeting : March 3rd. A.G.M. Members night

Meeting : April 7th. Mr.P.Muller - 'Insects and Management of Natural Reserves'.

Excursion : March 5th. Point Cook homestead.

Excursion : April 9th. Haddon/Linton Railway Reserve.



President;	Dr.F.Harrap	Ph. 053 301651
Vice Pres.	Miss H.Burgess	312210
Secretary:	Mr.G.Binns	332282
Treasurer:	Mrs.F.Williamson	327631
Editor:	Mr. D. D. D.	112270

Meetings as specified are held at the School of Mines and Industries, Lydiard Street Sth., Art Building, commencing at 7.30 p.m. EXCURSIONS, AS SPECIFIED, COMMENCE FROM CROCKERS, cnr. STURT AND ARMSTRONG STS., BALLARAT, at 9.30 a.m. for FULL DAY OUTINGS OR AT 1.30 p.m. for HALF DAY*

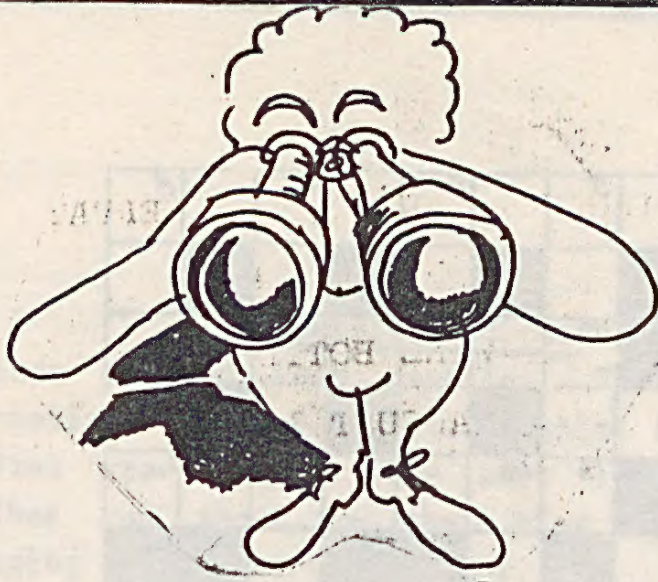
For Your Diary.

March 10 - 13 W.V.F.N.C. Campout Ocean Grove.
March 21 Committee Meeting - 1320 Dana St. 8 pm.
March 31 - April 2 First "Rainbow Festival" -
Amenities Building, S.M.B. Lydiard St Ballarat.
April 7 General Meeting: Speaker Mr P. Muller
Subject - Insects and management of Natural Reserve
Reserves.
April 9 Excursion: Haddon - Linton Railway reserve
April 15 Excursion with Bendigo F.N.C. to Lal Lal
Iron Mine Reserve. (Saturday). Depart Ballarat Wil
Wildlife and Reptile Park (Fussell st) at 1.30 pm.
April 21 - 23 Pt Campbell Coast Campout. A Club
outing under consideration.

COMMITTEE REPORT - Jan 31 '89

Items treated were:-

- 1 Correspondence.
- 2 A.C.F. 'Green Pages' inventory questionnaire - to be returned.
- 3 Ballarat Strategy Plan - L.C.C. recommendations to be reinforced as club comment.
- 4 Plantations Impact Study - it was noted that Ballarat region quota was unchanged in plan ie no further planting of softwood plantations.
- 5 Salt and the Earth Exhibition - Museum request for volunteer supervisors to be put to members.
- 6 By-pass Route - removal of native plants for relocation when road works completed - suggested by G. Wallace. Agreed to forward letter of expression of interest to R.C.A., and discuss matter with members.
- 7 Agreed to discuss publication of "Natural History Activity Diary; related to activities of group, with Rodger Thomas; as proposal to Courier management.
- 8 Agreed to hold March excursion at Point Cook Homestead Park, as a full day picnic excursion by Port Philip Bay.
- 9 Arrangements for the A.G.M.
- 10 Syllabus 1989 - 90. Further planning alternative venue for Memorial Lecture to be explored.

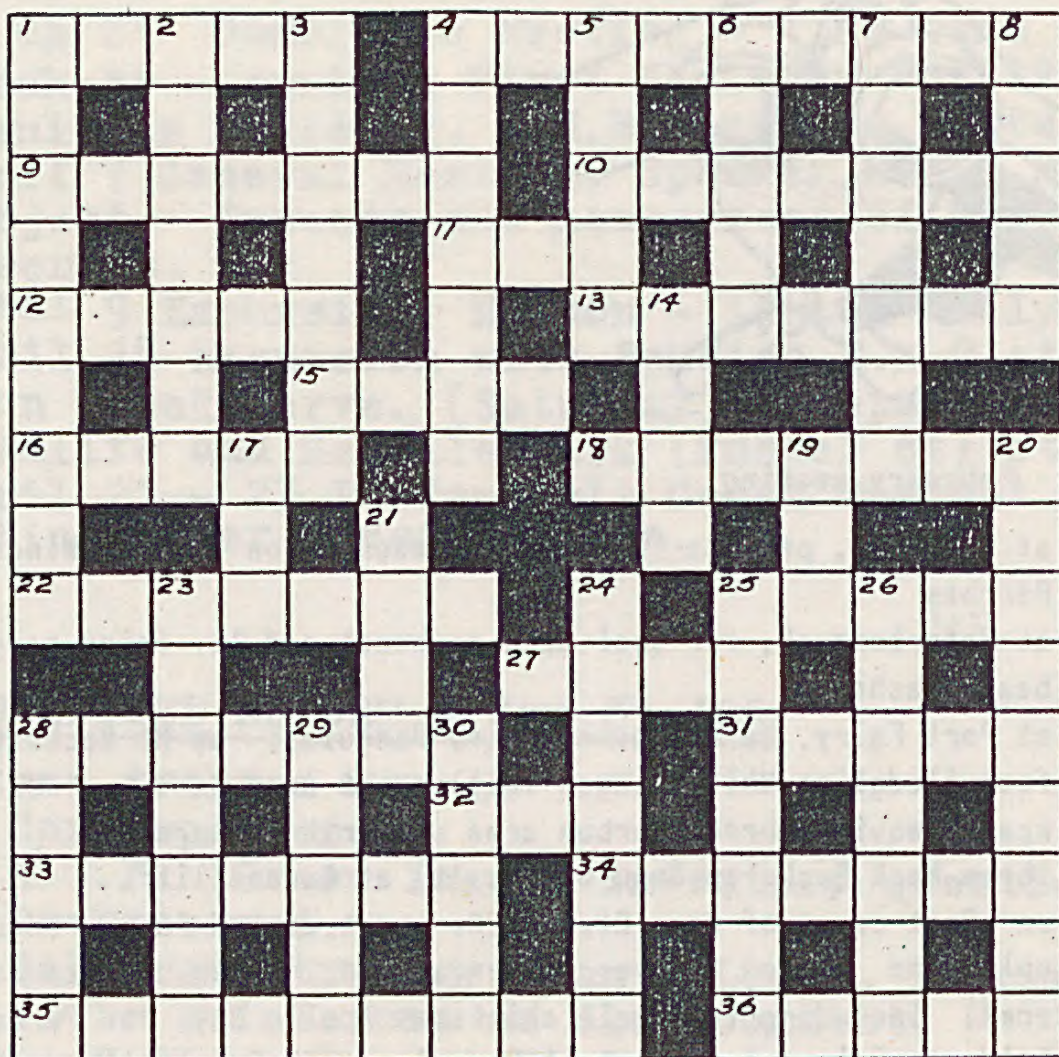


Field Reports - February meeting

- V.Hocking at Dartmoor, parrots fitting the description of Blue-Winged Parrots
- A.Dalman at Peterborough, fur seal dead on beach and 10+ fairy penguins beach washed
- M.Rotheram at Port Fairy, beach washed Fairy Penguins; at Mt Beckwith four fledgling White Winged Trillers at nest.
- H.Burgess koalas moving through urban area of North Ballarat.
- A.Morrison three Musk Ducks on Swan Bay (salt) at Queenscliff.
- G.Binns on East coast of Cape Otway, 20+ beach washed Fairy Penguins; only one Hooded Plover observed. A number of Red Capped Plovers (Dotterel) including two small chicks at Apollo Bay. Two Peregrine Falconssafely out of nest at Dereel, at Christmas time.
- H.Hooper commented on instances of Plumbago species in district.



Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike.



Natural History Crossword No. 12 by Tantalus.

ACROSS

1 Lemur, also applied to kinkajou. (5) 4 Robin ----- (9) 9 In a crocodile children are (5,2) 10 Where a hen may be found (2,1,4) 11 Metal (Sn) (3) 12 Obscure bird! (5) 13 Birds may fly in this formation (7) 15 Common Wallaroo (4) 16 The beaver is often so described (5) 18 A non-natural material (7) Disease caused by vitamin D deficiency (7) 25 Cereal product (5) 27 Animal fibre (4) Cavity, as in the heart. (7) 31 Fleshy bit at the rear of the palate. (5) 32 Type; kind (3) 33 The Moa is (7) 34 The spider ---- its prey (7) 35 Chelonian (Pl) (9) 36 Water grasses (5)

DOWN

1 Arctic animal (5,4) 2 The Chihuahua is one (4,3) 3 It would make tough venison (3,4) 4 Bird of prey (6) 5 Male honey bee (5) Fish of carp family (5) 7 See from this what the owl eats (1,6) 8 -----osaurus a gigantic Cretaceous dinosaur (5) 14 Young horse (4) Deer akin to N. American moose (3) 19 The sun personified (3) 20 Carrion (9) 21 Infection of the eye (4) 23 Sparrow talk? (7) 24 Bones move in them (7) 28 Many birds have one (5) 29 Paterson's shark? (5) 30 Courting ----- are species specific (5)

The Origin of Birds

Birds evolved from reptiles. The early ancestors of modern birds were similar to some dinosaurs which lived in the Triassic period (225-180 million years ago). They were lizard-like creatures long legs and tails. They ran about on their hind legs, flapping their wings and sometimes managing to fly short distances.

The Archaeopteryx, which lived in the Jurassic period (180-135 million years ago), is considered to be the first known bird. Archaeopteryx fossils were found in Bavaria in 1861 and again in 1898. The fossils show that it was about the size of a crow with a long bony tail, a reptilian type brain and teeth sockets in its jaws. It was not adapted to flight in the same way as modern birds. There was no fusion of 'hand' and 'wrist-bone' and it had three fingers on each 'hand'. In addition it did not appear to have hollow bones as do modern birds.

Modern birds and reptiles still have some characteristics in common; both lay eggs although bird's eggs are often coloured; on hatching the young of both have a horny protuberance on their bill or snout called the egg tooth; certain muscular and skeletal features are also held in common.

Differences include the birds being warm blooded whilst the reptiles body temperature varies with air temperature. Birds guard their eggs whilst reptiles generally do not. Young birds need care from their parents but reptiles are independent from birth. Lastly, the scales which cover reptiles have developed into the intricate, often beautifully coloured feathers of the fascinating Kingdom of birds we see around us every day
(Ed)



SLATEY CREEK EXCURSION

Sunday 4th December, 1988

The weather was warm and humid with threatening skies as about 20 people toured into the Creswick forest. Fortunately the threatened rain held off during the afternoon.

Our first stop was damp gully at Cabbage Tree. There was a dense growth of Hawthorn, Briar Rose, Gorse, Spiny Bursaria and Bracken covering the holes and mullock heaps left by the miners. This provided an excellent habitat for many birds. We observed a Grey Fantail sitting on its wine-glass shaped nest, bound with spider web. The nest was about 1 metre above the ground in a Hawthorn tree. Nearby was a Red-browed Firetail nest in a Gorse bush. This nest was like a bottle with the opening on one side hidden in long, protruding stems of grass. Many stick nests of Ring-tailed Possums were seen and from one a possum was disturbed.

We saw fleeting glimpses of a Rufous Fantail as it flitted through the bush, never perching for long. Other birds seen in this area were Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Fantailed Cuckoo, White-naped Honeyeater, White-throated Treecreeper, Yellow Robin, Crimson Rosella (sitting in front of nesting hollow), Superb Blue Wren, Sacred Kingfisher, Brown Thornbill, Crested Shrike-tit and Bronzewing. An interesting, domed nest was seen about 3 metres high in the foliage of a peppermint. No birds were found attending the nest so an accurate identification will require further observation. Calls of other birds, including Kookaburra and Whistlers, were heard but they were not sighted.

Afternoon tea was enjoyed at a dam on the Creswick to Bungaree road. The Bullrush at one end of the dam was the home of many Reed Warblers. Coot, Little Pied Cormarant and Black Duck were seen on the dam. Varied Sitella were feeding on insects as they moved down the branches of trees. White-eared Honeyeaters were feeding in the foliage. A pair of White-throated Treecreepers were observed taking food to young in a hollow tree.

Although the dry spring has led to early flowering of many plants we saw Pink Bells, Black-anther Flax Lilly, Chocolate Lilly, Pale Vanilla Lilly, Yam Daisy, Goodenia, Grass-leaved Trigger Plant, Blue Pincushion, Bird Orchid and Onion Orchid. Spikes of Hyacinth Orchid have already pushed up to 10 cm above the ground.

Thanks to Ken Hammond's careful research of this area we had an interesting excursion in the Creswick Forest, close to Ballarat. J.G.



ABOUT THOSE AEROSOL CANS

Aerosol Packers have advised us that all spray cans should now be checked, on purchase, to see what propellant is used. If it is Hydro carbon, CO₂ or Dimethyl Ether, you can buy that product with confidence as the propellant is OZONE FRIENDLY! Other types are environmentally undesirable.

ANCHOR PLANT PROJECT REPORT

The balance of the grant funds from the Australian Bicentennial Authority has been received and plans for the development two further selected areas for planting are under consideration. The Saizort enclosure has been de-thistled and the fencing of the Lal Lal enclosure completed.

The plants at both sites fruited well in January and additional seed of good quality was collected by Greg. Wallace of the Dept. of C.F. & L., a member of the steering committee.

Seedlings at the government nursery at Creswick are progressing well and some Autumn planting is proposed as the initial move to reinstate further plants in the protected sites.

G.W.B.

VICTORIAN NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION

The V.N.P.A. has assisted in the creation of a network of Friends of Parks Groups across Victoria. This is being extended to include Friends of Flora and Fauna Groups which participate in many kinds of activities relating to the species under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee. The V.N.P.A. will be happy to provide guide lines and other information to interested parties, i.e. those who may wish to form a Frinds of F.&F. Group. Contact: 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, Ph. 03 6546843.

FAMILY SCROPHULARIACEAE

The name of this family is derived from the genus *Scrophularia*, some members of which were supposed in the middle ages to cure scrophula - scrofula - (swellings of some lymph glands in cases of tuberculosis).

It is a rather large cosmopolitan family with 200-250 genera and about 5000 species. In Australia there are 24 native genera and a further 24 genera contains species that have been naturalized.

Many members of the family are cultivated for ornamental purposes e.g.

Antirrhinum	- snapdragon
Digitalis	- foxglove
Verbascum	- mulleins
Veronica	- speedwells
Paulownia	a tree from China which has recently received more attention in Victoria.

Willis in the Handbook to Plants in Vic. refers to 19 genera and Flora of South Australia also contains descriptions of plants in 19 genera. The species found near Ballarat belong to five genera.

H.H.

Do you ever get confused trying to remember the order of Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, Species, Form? Try using this mnemonic; King Peter came over from Germany seeking favours.

Easy isn't it?

(Ed)

Terminal Trivia

1) RAPTOR: From the Latin raptor, the past participial stem of rapere, to seize: plunder: rape. In the Latin plural RAPTORES a member of the (abandoned) Order of birds of prey including the eagle, hawk, owl, buzzard etc.

2) At least 110,000 species of native insects are found in Australia. Only a small percentage of these have been studied in detail.